

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02471 221017Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7348

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2471

NODIS

E.O. GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN APPREHENSIONS

REF: BEIRUT 3464

1. HAVE I MISSED REPORTING WHICH HAS RAISED QUESTIONS IN
AMBASSADOR BROWN'S MIND ABOUT SYRIAN INTENTIONS TOWARDS THEIR
ORIGINAL COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIANS?

2. A FEW WEEKS BACK, SYRIANS WERE TALKING PRIVATELY TO US AS
WELL AS PUBLICLY IN CATEGORIC TERMS RE THEIR INTENTION TO SEE THAT
PALESTINIANS HONORED THE CAIRO AGREEMENT (DAMASCUS 1249. SINCE
THAT TIME, OVERALL POWER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE LEBANON, AS
WELL AS BETWEEN SYRIA AND LEBANON, HAVE SHIFTED. THIS HAS BEEN
TO SOME DEGREE DUE TO USG DIPLOMACY WHICH SERVED TO INHIBIT
SYRIA'S INSTINCT ONE MONTH AGO TO INTERVENE WITH A MAJOR
MILITARY FORCE. OUR COUNSEL OF RESTRAINT MAY ONLY HAVE REINFORCED
SYRIA'S OWN APPRECIATION OF THE RISK OF ISRAELI REACTIONS. BUT
WHATEVER OUR INFLUENCE ON THE EQUATION, THE SYRIANS HAVE BEEN
COMPELLED TO RETURN TO THE LONGER AND MORE TORTUOUS ROAD OF
NEGOTIATION THAN WAS THEIR OWN INSTINCT BEGINNING MARCH 23 AND
ESPECIALLY AFTER THE CONFRONTATION THEY HAD HERE WITH JUMBLATT
ON MARCH 27.

3. WHEN THE LEBANESE HAVE CARRIED THROUGH THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL
PROCESSES OF ELECTING A NEW PRESIDENT, A PRINCIPLE WHICH ASAD HAS
STEADILY SUPPORTED IN THE FACE OF LEFTIST LEBANESE AND SOME
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 02471 221017Z

PALESTINIAN CRITICISM, THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO ASSURE SECURITY FOR

LEBANON WILL REMAIN. I SUBMIT IT IS "NOT PROVEN" SYRIA HAS BROKEN
FAITH WITH THE CHRISTIANS. IN FACT, THE SHOE MAY BE ON THE OTHER
FOOT.

4. SUGGEST PASS ADDRESSEES STATE 94263 (BEIRUT REFTEL).
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CHRISTIANS, POLICIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC02471
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850107-2685
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760435/aaaabdgvtel
Line Count: 67
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 3464
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHRISTIAN APPREHENSIONS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006